

I am writing in support of Bill Number 317, an act concerning dyslexia. My name is Adam. I am a student at Turkey Hill School in Orange, Connecticut. I am 11 years old and in sixth grade. I am dyslexic. In the summer before I entered fourth grade, I got a special teacher to help me with my reading and writing skills. Before that, school was always challenging. I had a hard time learning how to read and I hated writing. My worst years were fourth and fifth grade. My teachers didn't understand my disability and I would get in trouble for not finishing my work on time. The teachers thought when I advocated for myself I was being rude. They said I couldn't finish my work because of my behavior. It was like they thought I wanted to struggle and not complete my work. Who would want to fail? In fifth grade my teachers even put me on a behavior plan. Even my special education teacher didn't understand me. She didn't believe in dyslexia and she didn't help me at all. One of the paras even called me lazy. This year my sixth grade teachers are much better but they still don't truly understand me. I got a new special education teacher. She is much better than last year's special education teacher because she has some training about what dyslexia is. She seems to understand me more. She tries to help me and give me what I need to succeed. She even works with the three teachers I see for my regular subjects to teach them about dyslexia. Even though she understands what dyslexia is, she is not trained in the proper interventions for dyslexic students, like my tutor is. My tutor is trained in Orton Gillingham, a program to teach dyslexic children like me. I wish all schools had teachers trained in Orton Gillingham, so all dyslexic kids could get the proper help! If my teachers were trained in Orton Gillingham in the beginning when I started school, and understood dyslexia, maybe I would have received help earlier. With earlier help, I might not continue to struggle as much as I do now. The Orton Gillingham is helping me but it is harder to catch up to my friends because they learned to read a lot earlier than me. It seems like I am always playing catch up. They are always one step ahead of me. If my teachers understood how to teach me and recognize my dyslexia in kindergarten, they could have helped me earlier. Please pass Bill Number 317, but include ongoing, quality training for all teachers. All teachers that work with me, should understand dyslexia. Please give dyslexic kids a chance to succeed!